

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 080748  
ORIGIN NEA-07

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ONY-00 /008 R

DRAFTED BY NEA/ARN:MDRAPER:GCB  
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DESIRED DISTRIBUTION  
NEA DISTRIBUTION ONLY  
-----112103Z 027325 /62  
O 112049Z APR 77  
FM SECSTATE WASHDC  
TO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 080748

STADIS////////////////////////////////////  
LIMDIS FOR CHARGE FROM DRAPER

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, SY, US

SUBJECT: SYRIAN JEWRY--RABBI HECHT'S VISIT

1. RABBI HECHT AND HIS GROUP OF 20 MEMBERS OF THE AMERICAN-SYRIAN JEWISH COMMUNITY IN NEW YORK WILL LEAVE NEW YORK VIA PANAM 66 ON MAY 1 AND ARRIVE DAMASCUS AT 5:45 P.M. ON MONDAY, MAY 2. THE 20 PEOPLE ARE MORE OR LESS AS DESCRIBED IN OUR EARLIER CABLE. ALL HAVE SOME DIRECT OR INDIRECT CONNECTION WITH SYRIA'S JEWISH COMMUNITY. ALL, EXCEPT FOR RABBI HECHT HIMSELF, WILL BE ABLE TO COMMUNICATE IN ARABIC OR FRENCH. RABBI HECHT HIMSELF UNDERSTANDS SOME ARABIC BUT IS NOT TOO FLUENT. THERE WILL BE BOTH MEN AND WOMEN; SOME WILL BE MARRIED COUPLES.

2. THEY HAVE ARRANGED FOR A BUS THROUGH THEIR TRAVEL AGENT. THEY INTEND TO STAY IN DAMASCUS UNTIL ABOUT FRIDAY AND WANT  
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TO SPEND THE WEEKEND IN ALEPPO. SOME MEMBERS OF THE PARTY WANT VERY MUCH TO GO TO QAMISHLI. OVER THE PASSOVER HOLIDAYS, RABBI HECHT'S CONGREGATION RAISED SOME \$20,000 FOR RELIGIOUS ARTICLES, PHYLACTERIES, TALMUDIC BOOKS, ETC., BASED ON LIST MADE BY STEVE SHALOM DURING HIS VISIT THERE. RABBI HECHT WOULD APPRECIATE EMBASSY'S ADVICE ON BRINGING THESE MATERIALS INTO DAMASCUS. COULD HE ASSUME THERE WOULD

BE NO MAJOR PROBLEM IN MOVING ITEMS THROUGH CUSTOMS? WE

TOLD HIM WE THOUGHT THERE WOULD BE NO SERIOUS PROBLEMS,  
ALTHOUGH SYRIAN CUSTOMS MIGHT WANT TO INSPECT THE MATERIALS.  
IDEALLY, THE RABBI WOULD LIKE TO BRING THE MATERIAL AS  
AIR FREIGHT ON THE PANAM FLIGHT ON WHICH HE WOULD BE  
TRAVELING. ALTERNATIVELY, HE MIGHT SEND THE MATERIAL IN  
ADVANCE. SHOULD HE CONSIGN THIS SHIPMENT TO HIMSELF?

3. WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR ADVICE AND SUGGESTIONS AS SOON  
AS YOU CAN, AND IDEALLY BY CLOSE OF BUSINESS WASHINGTON  
TIME WEDNESDAY.  
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## Message Attributes

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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
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**Decaption Date:** 22 May 2009  
**Decaption Note:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 22 May 2009  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
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**Errors:** N/A  
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**Review Markings:**  
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